COMIC SHOP NEWS™

White Ash: Sharing Major & Miner Details

Western Pennsylvania is mining country, and White Ash is a mining town. It's also the place that Aleck Zwerg wants to put in his rearview mirror... but that proves more difficult than he ever imagined in ***White Ash,*** a new series by *Charlie Stickney & Conor Hughes.*

"As we say in ***White Ash***, 'The Smaller the Town, the Bigger the Secrets,'" *Charlie Stickney* told ***CSN,*** "and a lot of the joy of the series is seeing how all of those mysteries play out. At its core, ***White Ash*** is about guy who comes from a tiny coal mining town who can't wait to move on to bigger and better things. I think that's a feeling that a lot of us can relate to—not becoming our parents (especially if our parents happened to work in a coal mine).

"However, as that day of liberation finally arrives and he can head off to college, an accident at the mine keeps Aleck in town for a few more days... long enough for him to strike up a relationship with Lillian, the daughter of the man (Thane) who owns the coal mine. Neither of their families want them anywhere near each other and make that quite clear to Aleck and Lillian. But what starts out feeling like a tale of class quickly changes, as Aleck uncovers a hidden heritage (think high-fantasy) that upends everything he ever thought he knew about himself and the town of White Ash.

"This new awareness, coupled with Lillian's enthusiasm, sets Aleck down a path of discovery and danger. If he can survive the ordeal, he may rethink his decision to leave White Ash, as Aleck will finally understand what his legacy truly is."

So what is it about Lillian that convinces Aleck to give up his plans to make a fresh start far away from White Ash? "Well, it's complicated—and she is, too!" Stickney said. "First of all, thanks to artist *Conor Hughes'* linework, she's just got that *it* factor — in an *Audrey-Hepburn*-meets-*Margot-Robbie* kinda way. On top of that, Aleck can't decide if he finds her more frustrating or appealing (as they often do, each exacerbates the other.)

"In a lot of ways, Lillian is Aleck's polar opposite. She grew up rich and seemingly pampered, yet there's a restlessness of not fitting into the White Ash box that their parents have drawn for them, that bonds them together. Plus, she gets Aleck into lots of trouble... trouble that's going to make leaving difficult."

While Stickney didn't want to spoil the story by giving away the secret that Aleck uncovers, he explained that "it's a secret that speaks to the core of who Aleck really is. Imagine you grew up thinking you were the only man left alive in the world, because your parents were scientists and they wanted to see how a man would develop differently in a society of all women. Would he be more respectful? Would he try to assume a dominant posture as the 'sole surviving' progenitor of the species? How would he self-identify? And then, you found out on your 20th birthday that you were just part of an experiment. Wouldn't that make a huge difference to you? To be clear, White Ash isn't about that *at all*. But that amount of soul-shaking/reexamining of what you think you knew about your life is the journey that Aleck is about to undertake."

While the interpersonal relationship of Aleck and Lillian is central to ***White Ash,*** the fantasy aspect is also pivotal to the story, as is an ancient evil that returns to threaten White Ash. What is the nature of this evil? "Imagine a Twinkie that was 35 feet long and weighing approximately 600 pounds... hmm, maybe it's too early for a ***Ghostbusters*** reference," Stickney joked. "Seriously, the whole history of White Ash, both good and bad, is tied up in an event that happened over a thousand years ago. At which point an evil creature—or creatures—crossed over, and everything that's transpired since then traces a direct path back to that event. As to what that evil is specifically? Think large, powerful, with a touch more magic than you'd like. The book *is* a fantasy series, (albeit in Pennsylvania) so let your imagination fly in that direction."

One of the less likeable denizens of White Ash is Seth, who turns out to be quite a nasty character. "He's inhumanely strong with a voracious appetite for both cruel mischief and human flesh," Stickney said. "Seth also has the ability to arouse a victim to the point where they're willing to do whatever he says just to have a release. This combo makes him the villain you'd most want to die for and least want to see. He's incredibly fun to write. I think readers are really going to enjoy getting to know him and all his unpleasant ways."

Rural Pennsylvania seems like an unlikely setting for a fantasy tale, but there's a reason that Stickney set ***White Ash*** there. "Coal mining is an integral part of the mythos of the series. And I needed it to happen in a small, ***Twin Peaks***–esque town in the middle of nowhere, that could have believably been one of the first colonies that started popping up in America. That basically left me two choices: Virginia and Pennsylvania. And between the two, Pennsylvania has so many more ash trees. And that's important..."

Stickney found artist *Conor Hughes* the new-fashioned way: online. "I searched the wilds of the internet far and wide to find Conor. He and about 120 other artists responded to an ad I'd posted. A good friend of mine, who's an animation storyboard director (who's worked on everything from ***Hellboy*** to ***Bob's Burgers***) pored over the submissions with me. When he saw Conor's work, he said 'Stop. This is your guy.' And he was right: Conor's storytelling is incredible, and his art is beautiful. Aside from marrying my wife, probably the best decision I ever made!"

The concept for ***White Ash*** was already in development before Stickney crossed paths with Hughes, but once he had the artist on board, things really began to come together: "I'd written a lot of the story before Conor came on board. That said, when I saw how much he was adding to the visual world and how that was inspiring me to go new places with the narrative, I knew I wanted to have a different arrangement. So we decided to form a partnership. And that was the second best decision I ever made.

"Working as a team ensures that we can maintain a level of quality for the entire run of the series. I mean, imagine ***Saga*** if *Fiona Staples* left the book? Conor (with *Fin Cramb* on the colors) has defined the look of ***White Ash***. And hopefully that's something that people will enjoy for many years to come."

Scout has pitched the series as "***Romeo and Juliet*** meets ***Lord of the Rings,***" which is quite an unexpected literary mashup, but one that Stickney hopes to live up to. "***White Ash*** is not a literal version of the Shakespearian play set in a fantasy world. More so, it's a grounded fantasy set in Pennsylvania, with a bit of romance thrown in for good measure. How that plays out is what I like to call 'fantasy creep,' wherein the world starts out feeling just like ours—then, over the course of a couple of issues, the fantastical elements and creatures reveal themselves. The other pitch I like to go with is 'What if the guys from ***Supernatural*** got stuck in ***Riverdale*** and instead of battling demons from Hell had to deal with the worst of Middle Earth?' I'll probably have another pitch soon—gotta keep it fresh!"

Stickney has big plans for the town of White Ash and its inhabitants. "***White Ash*** is an ongoing series with defined story arcs. We're doing six issues in 2020 with Scout, and we have another six slated for 2021. Overall I have it plotted out as a very ambitious 60-issue series. But pending interest, there are some natural stopping points a bit earlier if needed.

"The nice thing about having a large blueprint is you can adjust as you go within the confines of the story without worrying about creating a problematic narrative. To that end, we could even make it longer if we found the support and desire was there for more story."

White Ash #1, a $3.99 comic from Scout, is scheduled for January 29th release.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy of your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

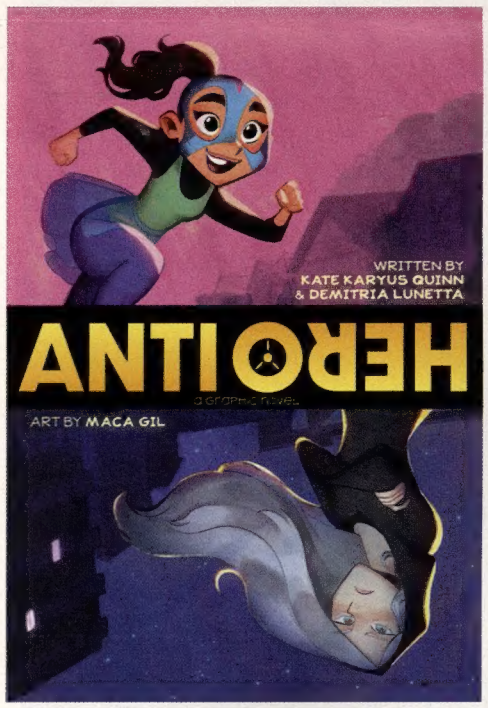
Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com*

Coming Comics—DC in February

The alliance between Leviathan and the Legion of Doom has fractured, and all hell breaks loose in ***Action Comics #1020*** (by *Brian Bendis, John Romita Jr, & Klaus Janson).* The Justice League and Young Justice guest star as the Year of the Villain hits a powerful note. Metropolis won't be the same after this massive battle for the future of the world.

Following her triumphant reintroduction in the pages of ***Young Justice***, teenager Amy Winston—aka Princess Amethyst—returns to her magical kingdom to celebrate her 16th birthday in style in ***Amethyst #1*** (by *Amy Reeder).* The only problem? Her kingdom is missing; her subjects have vanished, and none in the realm of Gemworld—not even her best friend, Lady Turquoise—remains loyal to her house! Alone and dejected, Amy's forced to find new allies and confront dark secrets on an all-new quest to the farthest reaches of Gemworld.

Piper Pájaro and Sloane MacBrute are two 13-year-old girls with very different lives but very similar secrets. Popular, outgoing Piper is strong—like, ripping-the-doors-off-cars strong. She longs to be a superhero, even if she tends to leave massive messes in her wake. Sloane, on the other hand, is snarky and supersmart. Like, evil-genius smart. To help her family, she has to put those smarts to use for her villainous grandfather. When a mission to steal an experimental technological device brings the two girls face to face with each other, the device sparks—and the two girls switch bodies! Now they must live in each other's shoes in ***Anti/Hero TP,*** an original all-ages graphic novel by *Kate Karyus Quinn, Demetria Lunetta, & Maca Gil.*



Mera and Aquaman welcome their very own Aquababy in ***Aquaman #57*** (by *Kelly Sue DeConnick, Robson Rocha, & Daniel Henriques).* In the wake of Black Manta's attack on Amnesty Bay, Aquaman encounters a new crisis when Mera unexpectedly goes into labor... and things don't look good for the queen of Atlantis.

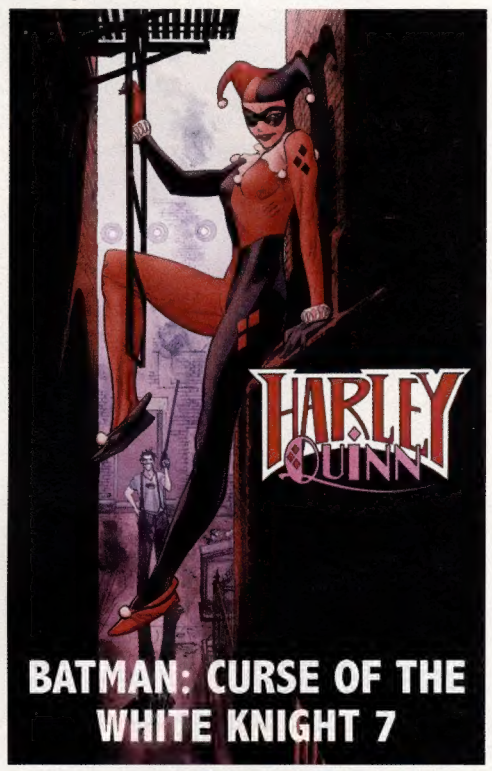
In ***Basketful of Heads #5*** (by *Joe Hill & Leomacs),* June Branch is the prisoner of a desperate and violent man who wants information. But who's really interrogating whom here? June's wits are sharp, but the occult Viking axe she has stashed nearby is even sharper... if only she can talk her way out of the cell she's in and get it back in her hands!

In ***Batgirl #44*** (by *Cecil Castellucci & Cian Tormey),* good neighborhoods have turned bad, and bad neighborhoods have turned worse in the aftermath of "City of Bane." As Barbara Gordon's friends and neighbors try to rebuild their homes, she faces a conflict she can't win with her fists: "Who Really Owns Gotham?" Batgirl intends to find out!

The conspiracy that will rock Batman's world continues to unfold as the Dark Knight travels to Arkham Asylum to get answers from the Penguin in ***Batman #88*** (by *James Tynion IV & Guillem March)*! What dark secret does he share with Joker, the Riddler, and... Catwoman? Then, in ***Batman #89,*** Batman must stop Deathstroke from killing the mayor of Gotham City! But to do so he has to figure out who ordered the hit in the first place.

In her pursuit of Blight, Batwoman finally discovers the fate of Batman in ***Batman Beyond #41*** (by *Dan Jurgens, Sean Chen, & Sean Parsons),* but doing so leaves her with a choice: take the villain into custody or free her friend and take him home. That is, if enough of Batman's mind is left that he'll even know what "home" means.

Bruce Wayne and Batman have come undone in *Sean Murphy's* ***Batman: Curse of the White Knight #7***. Powerless after learning the truth behind his family's name and legacy, Bruce prepares to shed all of his secrets and make one final appeal to the people of Gotham as Azrael takes control of the city.



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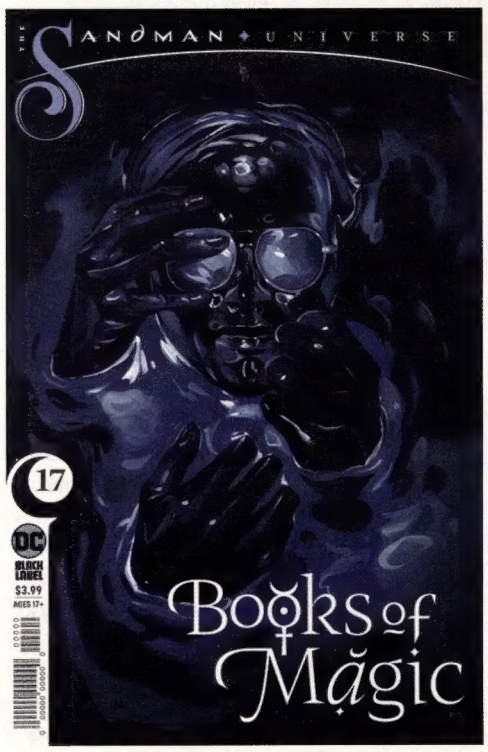
The Batman is summoned to Arkham Asylum in ***The Batman's Grave #5*** (by *Warren Ellis, Bryan Hitch, & Kevin Nowlan*), where he is presented with parts of a deadly puzzle he couldn't see assembling all around him. And he may not make it out alive.

When Batman recruited Black Lightning to join the Outsiders, he warned him of the dark world he was entering. Black Lightning shrugged it off, but now that Ra's al Ghul has gone after him directly, the darkness Batman warned of has enveloped him. Will the Outsiders be able to free him from it? Find out in ***Batman and the Outsiders #10*** (by *Bryan Hill & Dexter Soy*).

Alfred Pennyworth served the Wayne family for decades—even through the tragic loss of Bruce Wayne's parents. His death at the hands of Bane is the only event that could possibly compare to that fateful night in Crime Alley, and it leaves Bruce at a similar crossroads in ***Batman: Pennyworth RIP #1*** (by *James Tynion IV, Peter Tomasi, Eddy Barrows, Eber Ferreira,* and others). If Alfred was the glue that held the Bat-Family together, how will Batman deal with that all falling apart? And if the Caped Crusader is to be truly alone, he might either hang that cape up once and for all... or double down and carry on with this vengeful quest forever.

In the aftermath of "The Infected," Batman and Superman create new measures to prevent hidden and dangerous supervillain plots in the future. Using new technology to track villains throughout the DC Universe, the Dark Knight and the Man of Steel are startled to discover that General Zod has returned to Earth—and that his new target is... Ra's al Ghul! Learn what Zod's plan has to do with the destroyed bottle city of Kandor in ***Batman/Superman #7*** (by *Joshua Williamson & Nick Derington*).



Tim's doppelgänger has proven to be a surprisingly seductive ally... but he'll do anything it takes to stay here in our world! With Tim's troubles mounting, he has to ask himself: What if he just gave his older self what he wants? Find out in ***Books of Magic #17*** (by *Kat Howard, Tom Fowler, & Craig Taillefer*).

Raina Creel's thugs are making a move on the pawn shop where Catwoman has set up headquarters, and if Selina can't stop them, it could cost the lives of the allies she has working there in ***Catwoman #20*** (by *Joëlle Jones & Fernando Blanco*).

The spirit known as Brother reveals himself to Daphne in ***Daphne Byrne #2*** (by *Laura Marks & Kelley Jones*), and he wants only to help and protect her. But from whom, exactly, does Daphne need protection? The cruel girls at school? Or the medium who seems to be taking her mother even further under her wing?

Passion. Betrayal. Murder. When you're a private investigator like Slam Bradley, these are things you experience daily. But when you add capes to the mix—like Batman, Catwoman, and Harley Quinn—things get even messier, as readers will discover in ***DC Crimes of Passion #1,*** this year's Valentine's Day special featuring 10 tales of love—the kind of love that can push people over the edge.

What did the villains do when the heroes failed and the world ended in ***DCeased #6?*** Find out in ***DCeased: Unkillables #1*** as writer *Tom Taylor* returns to this dark world with a street-level tale of death, heroism, and redemption. Led by Red Hood and Deathstroke, DC's hardest villains and anti-heroes fight with no mercy to save the only commodity left on a dying planet of the undead—life!

As Gotham City continues its rise from the ashes of "City of Bane," some familiar faces return to Gotham in ***Detective Comics #1020*** (by *Peter Tomasi, Brad Walker, & Andrew Hennessy*)—and one of them is Two-Face. But this time, he's recruited an elite team of split-personality special forces to help him in his cause. As Two-Face and Batman square off, a new ally arrives to help the Dark Knight: Harvey Dent?!

In ***Dial H for Hero #12*** (by *Sam Humphries & Joe Quinones*), Miguel must face his most dangerous opponent yet—himself. With the fate of the Multiverse hanging in the balance, Miguel must battle his literal dark side. Will he and Summer survive the experience? And will the power of the H-Dial be lost forever?

Alice's worst nightmare comes true in ***The Dollhouse Family #4*** (by *Mike Carey, Peter Gross, & Vince Locke*): The Dollhouse has returned... and if it can't have her, it'll settle for her daughter!

With the so-called Peace Division firing upon the protesters it's meant to protect, new Green Lantern Jo Mullein devises a novel solution to bring the chaos to a close in ***Far Sector #4*** (by *NK Jemisin & Jamal Campbell*)—one that causes the rookie Lantern to run afoul of the City Enduring's leadership council.

While a supercharged Speed Force wreaks havoc on Barry Allen's life, a new threat appears on the horizon in the form of the deadly Paradox. Destined to destroy the Flash's legacy, Paradox sends his herald, Godspeed, to trap the Flash family in ***The Flash #750*** (by *Joshua Williamson & Rafa Sandoval*), a special anniversary issue that also features tales from across the generations of superspeedsters by an all-star lineup of writers and artists, including *Geoff Johns, Michael Moreci, Marv Wolfman, Francis Manapul, Jordi Tarragona, Scott Kolins, Stephen Segovia, David Marquez, Bryan Hitch, Francis Manapul, Riley Rossmo,* and others. This special issue will be offered with decades variant covers.

In ***Flash Forward #6*** (by *Scott Lobdell, Brett Booth, & Norm Rapmund*) Wally West must make the toughest choice of his life: save the day or save his family. With the crack in the Dark Multiversal barrier reaching critical mass, Wally's mettle will be tested in ways the young hero has never seen before...

In the wake of the Blackstar incursion, Hal Jordan and his fellow Lanterns must pick up the pieces in ***The Green Lantern Season Two #1*** (by *Grant Morrison & Liam Sharp*). Among them is Jordan's next critical mission: search for the next generation of cosmic immortals. Is the universe ready for... the Young Guardians?

Poison Ivy's shocking secret is revealed in ***Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy #6*** (by *Jody Houser, Adriana Melo, & Mark Morales*). Will Harley Quinn be able to make the ultimate sacrifice to become the hero she so desperately wants to be? Or will old habits die hard and end Harley and Ivy's friendship forever?

Harley's Los Angeles adventure takes an unexpected turn when she joins up with an underground wrestling troupe in ***Harley Quinn #70*** (by *Sam Humphries & Sami Basri)*. But when one of them winds up dead, Harley must track down the killer before they strike again!

Harley Quinn has avoided Gotham City ever since she broke up with Joker and found a home, and a kind of family, in Coney Island. But when she gets an offer she can't refuse in ***Harley Quinn and the Birds of Prey #1*** (by *Amanda Conner* with *Jimmy Palmiotti)*, she has no choice but to slip back into the city as quietly as she can, hoping to be gone before anyone—especially her ex—learns that she's been there. But for Harley, "as quietly as she can" is plenty loud—and before she can even say, "Holee bounty hunters, Batman," Joker's sicced every supervillain in the city on her pretty ombré head—and the only team tough enough (or crazy enough) to come to her defense is the Birds of Prey!

Sky Tyrant is on the verge of possessing the ultimate weapon, which would kill billions—ensuring his eternal rebirth. Hawkwoman is hot on his trail in ***Hawkman #21*** (by *Robert Venditti, Fernando Pasarin, & Oclair Albert)*, and she's enlisted the help of Carter Hall's long-time friends the Atom and Adam Strange.

Keldor travels to the Eternia of the 1980s Filmation cartoon series in ***He-Man and the Masters of the Multiverse #4*** (by *Tim Seeley, Dan Fraga, & Richard Friend)*. Still reeling from a tragic loss last issue, Keldor and He-Man must find the legendary Star Seed—the last power in the universe able to destroy Anti-He-Man before he claims another Castle Grayskull!

The Corinthian has been shattered into thousands of pieces, each one infecting an acolyte of Erzulie, turning their whispered prayers to her into incantations of horror. In ***House of Whispers #18*** (by *Nalo Hopkinson, Dan Watters, & Dominike "Domo" Stanton)*, it falls to Erzulie to pull every one of those shards together and reassemble the Corinthian...

John Constantine was missing for years—and in that time, England needed a mystical protector, a guardian at the gates. Heroically, the young man known as Tommy Willowtree stepped into the breach! This cosmically attuned mage has held evil at bay with the force of his positive white magic, unlocking a new era of peace for the citizens of London. He is a gentleman, a scholar, a clean-living vegan acolyte of love. So naturally, John Constantine hates his guts. And of course, they have to team up in ***John Constantine: Hellblazer #4*** (by *Simon Spurrier & Matias Bergara)*.

Harley Quinn follows the evidence in ***Joker/Harley: Criminal Sanity #3*** (by *Kami Garcia, Mico Suayan, & Mike Mayhew)*—and it leads her to a dangerous conclusion: She might know the true identity of the serial killer she's hunting. But as Harley digs deeper into Joker's past, he is watching her... and leaving a trail of bodies in his wake.

Everything Dr Ben Arnell knew is wrong. To whom can he turn? The Joker waits with open arms in ***Joker: Killer Smile #3*** (by *Jeff Lemire & Andrea Sorrentino)*... and all he needs from Ben is open cell doors!

The Floronic Man's unintended rise to power throws The Parliaments of Life into chaos in ***Justice League Dark #20*** (by *Ram V, James Tynion IV, & Kyle Hotz)*. With Swamp Thing gone, the Justice League Dark must join forces with some of the most powerful avatars, like Animal Man, to help set things right. But the magical team's troubles are just beginning, as an old evil from a familiar swamp casts its shadow over them all, waiting for the perfect time to strike!

An unexpected arrival from the stars brings a dire warning to the Justice League: A new breed of conquerors is on the march. Led by Superman's nemesis Eradicator, a genetically engineered, superpowered strike team has come to subjugate Earth in ***Justice League #40*** (by *Robert Venditti, Doug Mahnke, & Jaime Mendoza)*. To aid the Justice League, Batman makes the unprecedented decision of enlisting an ancient, unrivaled power, which calls into question who, exactly, is in charge.

Green Lantern Jessica Cruz and the new JLO have their first encounter with their lost friend Cyborg in ***Justice League Odyssey #18*** (by *Dan Abnett & Will Conrad)*. Will Victor Stone's hidden messages be the clue to releasing him from Darkseid's deadly grip, or is Vic gone forever?

The secret origin of the Legion is revealed in ***Legion of Super-Heroes #4*** (by *Brian Bendis, Ryan Sook, & Travis Moore)*. Exactly how did this ragtag group of idealistic, superpowered teens from all across the galaxy find each other? And what pulls them and keeps them together?

With Leviathan arrived, its leader's identity revealed, and its plans known, what happens next? Now the heroes fight back in the oneshot ***Leviathan Dawn #1*** (by *Brian Bendis & Alex Maleev)*. Leviathan changed the rules of the game, so now is the time for the biggest players to get together and figure out a new strategy in this brave new world

As the world comes to realize Lois Lane is also the wife of Superman and mother of Superboy, Lois finds herself hunted by a deadly assassin code-named the Kiss of Death in ***Lois Lane #8*** (by *Greg Rucka & Mike Perkins)*. The only thing standing between Lois and execution is the Question—but can Renee Montoya stop the Kiss before she fulfills her contract?

Haly's traveling circus no longer has the allure of its glamorous past, but it still has one main attraction: the Flying Graysons, a family of trapeze artists featuring a teenage Dick Grayson. The only problem is that Dick loathes spending his summers performing tired routines for dwindling crowds. When the Lost Carnival opens nearby and threatens to pull Haly's remaining customers, Dick is among those drawn to its nighttime glow. But there are ancient forces at work at the Lost Carnival, and when Dick meets the mysterious Luciana and her nomadic family, he may be too mesmerized to recognize the danger ahead in ***The Lost Carnival: A Dick Grayson Graphic Novel TP*** (by *Michael Moreci & Sas Milledge)*.

El and Octavia find themselves on two separate paths in ***The Low, Low Woods #3*** (by *Carmen Maria Machado & Dani)*. One leads to somewhere deep within the Earth, and the other leads to a small green trailer on the edge of town. There, the people of Shudder to Think, PA, say, lives a witch. For a price, she can change you—and even make you forget that which you no longer wish to remember.

Fear. Thrill. Blood. Honor. These are the four horsemen of Odin's wild hunt, whose prey Lucifer must—despite his personal feelings—protect at all costs in ***Lucifer #17*** (by *Dan Watters & Sebastian Fiumara)*, lest the Devil be cast back into the pit whence he came.

Witness the Martian Manhunter and Charnn's last confrontation in ***Martian Manhunter #12*** (by *Steve Orlando & Riley Rossmo)*. To save the souls of every human on Earth, J'onn must put his past behind him for good and become the hero we know him to be. But Charnn won't make it easy; he's going to strike at every vulnerability and weakness the Martian Manhunter has.

In ***Metal Men #5*** (by *Dan DiDio, Shane Davis, & Michelle Delecki)*, the Metal Men have to choose between Magnus, who gave them life, and the Nth Metal Men, who promise them true sentience—where do their loyalties lie? Meanwhile, back at the convention, Lead, Tin, and OMAC team up to face Mother Machine and her Mother Boys as they wreak havoc at Robot Con.

Talon has been vanquished, but his interference has put Ric on the trail of other members of the Court of Owls in ***Nightwing #69*** (by *Dan Jurgens & Ronan Cliquet)*. Have they been taking advantage of his injured state from the beginning? And what does that mean for the life he thought he lost?

In the aftermath of a devastating tsunami, an exploration vessel known as the Derleth begins sending an automated distress signal from a remote atoll in the Bering Strait. The only problem is that the Derleth has been missing for 40 years. Marine biologist Moriah Lamb joins the Carpenter Salvage team to recover the Derleth's dead in ***Plunge #1*** (a new Hill House title by *Joe Hill & Stuart Immonen)*... only to find that in this remote part of the Arctic Circle the dead have plenty to say to the living.

Spanning decades and genres while hearkening back to its origins, the story of superhero-turned-homicide-detective Christian Walker hurtles to its fantastic conclusion in ***Powers: The Best Ever HC*** (by *Brian Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming)*, a graphic novel that also incorporates remastered pages from ***Powers (2015) #s 7 & 8*** .

Billy and his family are about to face an onslaught of all their greatest foes in ***Shazam! #11*** (by *Geoff Johns, Dale Eaglesham, & Marco Santucci)*. Will they have the wherewithal to triumph?

It's Task Force X's first mission as a brand-new team of blood enemies, and things are already going horribly wrong in ***Suicide Squad #3*** (by *Tom Taylor & Bruno Redondo)*. As Squad members start to turn on each other, the mission rapidly falls to pieces—but new team leader Lok will let no bad deed go unpunished.

After the Lasso of Truth reveals something unexpected about Supergirl's infection, Wonder Woman is quickly running out of ways to try to bring Kara back peacefully. Making matters worse, the government has sent robotic military backup to Smallville to deal with the possible atomic threat of Infected Supergirl—and neither Wonder Woman nor Supergirl is prepared for the innocent casualties this could mean for the town in ***Supergirl #39*** (by *Jody Houser & Rachael Stott)*.

The United Planets is a perfect, beautiful idea that completely flies in the face of everything the barbaric Mongul has been fighting for his entire life. Mongul plans to destroy the United Planets—and Superman with it—in ***Superman #20*** (by *Brian Bendis, Ivan Reis, & Joe Prado)*.

When the Klan invades the newspaper's office, they kidnap Lois Lane, Perry White, and Inspector Henderson in ***Superman Smashes the Klan #3*** (by *Gene Luen Yang & Gurihiru)*. But the Klan has one more surprise to reveal. In order to save his friends and stop the Klan once and for all, Superman must face his own identity to unleash his full potential and ultimately accept who he really is.

In ***Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen #8*** (by *Matt Fraction & Steve Lieber)*, Jix and Jimmy go back to Gorilla City, where they had a one-night-marriage-stand. Jimmy's sister Janie and Doc Mantel get to Gorilla City to warn Jimmy about what Doc saw in the future, only to find it's the attack of the 50-foot Jimmy!

The Man of Steel's greatest villains react to the biggest news ever to rock the DC Universe in ***Superman: Villains #1*** (by *Brian Bendis, Matt Fraction, Greg Rucka, Jody Houser, Bryan Hitch,. Steve Lieber, Mike Perkins & Eduardo Pansica)*. Lex Luthor, Mongul, Toyman, Joker, and more of the world's greatest villains must come to grips with how the world changes now that the truth has been revealed by Superman.

Trapped in her ring with no escape, Djinn finds herself on the inside looking out as the Teen Titans go hunting for Djinn's older brother Elias in ***Teen Titans #39*** (by *Adam Glass, Robbie Thompson, & Eduardo Pansica)* But Elias's dark side is the stuff of legends... and the Teen Titans know he can't be trusted.

In the extra-length ***Terrifics #25*** (by *Gene Luen Yang & Dan Mora)*, Michael Holt has discovered a deadly hidden enemy, and only a series of life-or-death simulations can bring the threat to the forefront! But when Mr Terrific lies to his team, how can they trust him again? Don't miss this epic multi-path journey that puts the reader in charge of the story!

Starfire has been kidnapped and forced into gladiatorial combat on Warworld—and her opponent is the merciless Mongul in ***Titans: Burning Rage #7*** (by *Dan Jurgens, Scot Eaton, & Wayne Faucher)*! It's up to Robin, Raven, and Beast Boy to save their friend—but how can they even find her when she's light-years away?

While Wonder Woman battled Cheetah on Themyscira and stood with the Justice League against the Legion of Doom, Leviathan struck! Without Diana's help, Etta Candy and Steve Trevor lost everything when ARGUS was destroyed. Unable to accept defeat at the hands of Leviathan, Trevor hunts down their agents one by one, becoming one of the world's most wanted. Now Wonder Woman must find Trevor in ***Wonder Woman #86*** (by *Steve Orlando & Max Raynor)*... before the rest of the DC Universe does.

Determined to give the remnants of humanity refuge on the shores of Themyscira, Wonder Woman's hopes are dashed when she finds the island paradise a shadow of its former self, with her Amazon sisters long gone and something unimaginable in their place, in *Daniel Warren Johnson's* ***Wonder Woman: Death Earth #2.***

The world is saved again in ***Wonder Twins #12*** (by *Mark Russell & Stephen Byrne*). But now Zan and Jayna must answer to the Justice League for the choices they made in order to save it.

Apex Lex Luthor's first run-in with the Infected didn't go as planned, and the Batman Who Laughs' influence is continuing to spread in ***Year of the Villain: Hell Arisen #3*** (by *James Tynion IV, Steve Epting, & Javi Fernandez*). Now Lex must find out who in the world can think like the Batman Who Laughs—and there are only two folks who come to mind. The first is Batman, who probably has his own ideas for Lex; the other is Joker, who also likely has his own ideas, but who just *maybe* wants to see this twisted doppelgänger sent back to the Dark Multiverse he came from...

Young Justice searches for Conner Kent in ***Young Justice #12*** (by *Brian Bendis, David F. Walker, John Timms, & Mike Grell*) as the teen Superboy find himself trapped in the mysterious world of Skartaris, the home of legendary DC character Warlord!

DC's ***Dollar Comics*** reprints for February include:

- ***Batman #386*** (the debut of the Black Mask)
- ***Batman: Shadow of the Bat #1***
- ***Batman #567*** (introducing Cassandra Cain)
- ***Green Lantern: Rebirth #1***
- ***The Flash: Rebirth #1***
- ***The New Teen Titans #2*** (the first appearance of Deathstroke the Terminator)
- ***Amethyst #1***
- ***The Flash #1 (1987)*** (the premiere of Wally West as the Flash)

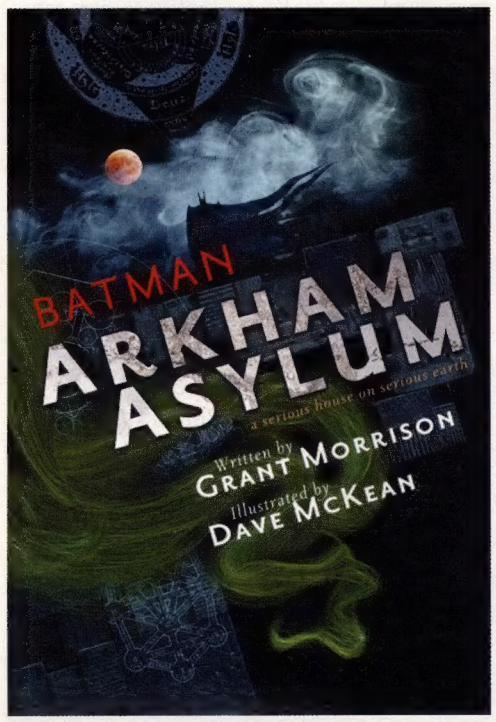
DC's ads-and-all facsimile editions for February include ***The Flash #123 Facsimile Edition*** (reprinting the first multiverse tale in the DCU) and ***Green Lantern #1 Facsimile Edition*** (reprinting the first Silver Age issue by *John Broome & Gil Kane*).

DC's 96-page giant issues for February, which feature at least 24 pages of new material along with classic reprints, include:

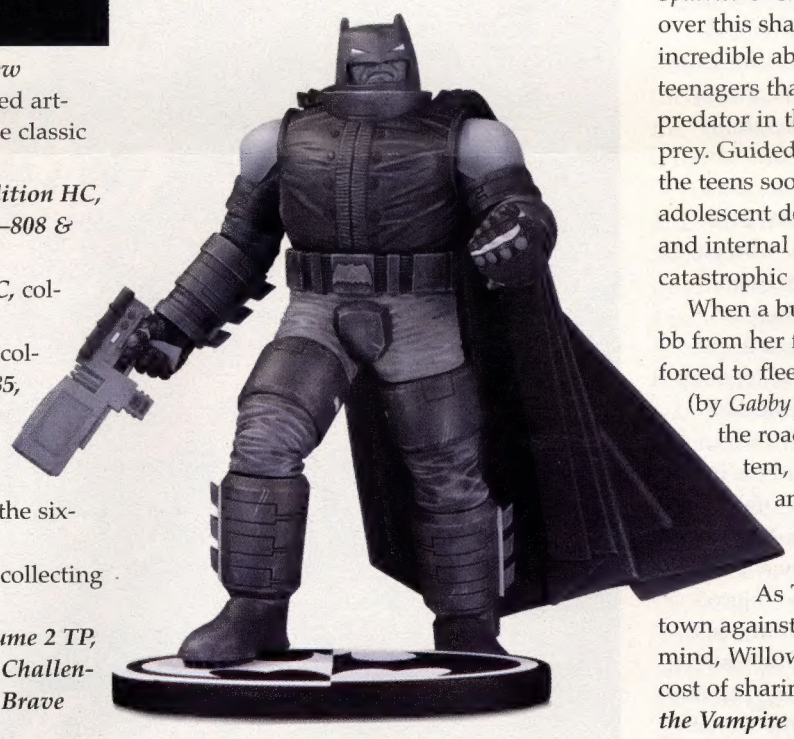
- ***Batman Giant #3***
- ***Crisis on Infinite Earth Giant #2***
- ***The Flash Giant #3***
- ***Swamp Thing Giant #3***
- ***Wonder Woman Giant #3***

DC collected editions (advance solicited for March and April release) include:

- ***Absolute Gotham by Gaslight HC,*** a deluxe oversized slipcased collection of ***Gotham by Gaslight, Master of the Future, Countdown Special: The Search for Ray Palmer—Gotham by Gaslight #1,*** and ***Convergence: Shazam! #s 1–2.***
- ***Batman: Alfred Pennyworth TP,*** a 248-page collection of the greatest stories in Alfred's 75-year history, ranging from 1943's ***Batman #16*** to ***Batman Annual (2016) #3.***



- ***Batman: Arkham Asylum HC (New Edition),*** featuring newly remastered artwork by *Dave McKean* and the same classic story by *Grant Morrison.*
- ***Batman: City of Crime Deluxe Edition HC,*** collecting ***Detective Comics #s 800–808 & 811–814.***
- ***Batman: Creature of the Night HC,*** collecting the four-issue miniseries.
- ***Batman: Tales of the Demon HC,*** collecting ***Detective Comics #s 411, 485, & #489–490; Batman #s 232, 235, 240, & 242–244;*** and ***DC Special Series #15.***
- ***Batman: Universe HC,*** collecting the six-issue series.
- ***DMZ Compendium Volume 1 TP,*** collecting ***DMZ #s 1–36.***
- ***Doom Patrol: The Silver Age Volume 2 TP,*** collecting ***Doom Patrol #s 96–107, Challengers of the Unknown #48,*** and ***The Brave and the Bold #65.***
- ***Event Leviathan HC,*** collecting the six-issue series and ***Superman: Leviathan Rising #1.***
- ***Harley Quinn Volume 4: The Final Trial TP,*** collecting ***Harley Quinn #s 64–69*** and ***Harley Quinn: Villain of the Year #1,*** including alternate pages.
- ***Just Imagine Stan Lee Creating the DC Universe Book One TP,*** collecting ***Just Imagine Stan Lee with Dave Gibbons Creating Green Lantern #1, Just Imagine Stan Lee with Jerry Ordway Creating JLA #1, Just Imagine Stan Lee with Jim Lee Creating Wonder Woman #1, Just Imagine Stan Lee with Joe Kubert Creating Batman #1, Just Imagine Stan Lee with John Buscema Creating Superman #1,*** and ***Just Imagine Stan Lee with Kevin Maguire Creating Flash #1.***
- ***Justice League of America: A Celebration of Sixty Years HC,*** collecting ***The Brave and the Bold #28; Justice League of America #s 29–30, 79, 140, 144, & 200 (1964–1982); Justice League of America Annual #2; Justice League #1 (1987); JLA #s 1 & 43; Justice League of America #1 (2006); Justice League #1 (2011);*** and ***Justice League #1 (2018).***
- ***Justice League of America: The Nail—The Complete Collection TP,*** collecting ***Justice League of America: The Nail #s 1–3*** and ***Justice League of America: Another Nail #s 1–3.***
- ***Robin: Year One TP,*** collecting the four-issue series.
- ***Superman Volume 2: The Unity Saga—The House of El TP,*** collecting ***Superman #s 7–15.***
- ***Teen Titans Go! Box Set Two,*** collecting ***Truth, Justice, Pizza!; Heroes on Patrol; Falling Stars;*** and ***Weirder Things.***
- ***Tales of the Batman: Marv Wolfman Volume 1 TP,*** collecting ***Batman #s 328–335 & 436–439; Detective Comics #408; The Brave and the Bold #167; World's Finest Comics #288; The New Teen Titans #37;*** and ***Batman and the Outsiders #5.***
- ***Wonder Woman: The Cheetah TP,*** collecting stories from ***Wonder Woman #6 (1943), #s 274–275 (1980), #9 (1987); The Flash #219 (2005); Wonder Woman #214 (2005); Justice League #13–14 (2012); Wonder Woman #23.1 (2013);*** and ***Wonder Woman #8 (2016).***



Coming in July from DC Collectibles

- ***Batman Black & White: Armored Batman by Frank Miller Statue,*** based on *Frank Miller's* design from the 1986 series ***The Dark Knight Returns.***
- ***Batman Rogues Gallery Multi-Part Statue: Harley Quinn,*** the fourth piece of the ***Batman Rogues Gallery Multi-Part Statue*** series.
- ***DC Designer Series: Nightwing by Jim Lee Mini-Statue,*** depicting Lee's ***Hush***-style Nightwing.
- ***Batman: The Adventures Continue—Deathstroke, Robin Super-Armor Batman,*** and ***The Joker Action Figures,*** 1:12 scale figures with accessories (each sold separately).
- ***DC Designer Series: Metal Batman by Greg Capullo Mini-Statue,*** a smaller casting of the sold-out statue.

Coming Comics—Boom! in February

Three teenagers, each an outcast in their own way, stumble upon an unearthly entity as it's born in ***Alienated #1*** (by *Simon Spurrier & Chris Wildgoose*). As they bond over this shared secret and the creature's incredible abilities, it becomes clear to the teenagers that their cute little pet is a superpredator in the making—and it's in need of prey. Guided by the best intentions at first, the teens soon make decisions corrupted by adolescent desires, small-town jealousies, and internal rivalries, sending them into a catastrophic spiral of their own making.

When a burst of unexpected power saves bb from her father, she and Chulita are forced to flee Chulita's family in ***bb free #4*** (by *Gabby Rivera & Royal Dunlap*). Now on the road, and without a support system, the two friends head out to find an old friend and hopefully learn more about the visions that have started plaguing bb.

As Team Kendra fight for their town against the Hellmouth-possessed hivemind, Willow and Xander begin to feel the cost of sharing a soul between them in ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer #12*** (by *Jordie Bellaire & David Lopez*). With darkness creeping into the place a soul should be, one of them will start down a road from which he or she cannot turn back.

Angel and Buffy finally confront the enemy in the heart of the Hellmouth in ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Hellmouth #5*** (by *Jordie Bellaire, Jeremy Lambert, & Eleonora Carlini*), but the journey has already taken its toll. Beaten in body and spirit, they might not have enough power between them to save the world. With more allies than they know, Buffy and Angel will make their final stand... and not everyone will make it out alive.

After the shocking conclusion to Hellmouth, only one vampire can protect Los Angeles... and it's Spike? But as Team Spike

must face a new threat in the evil forces of Wolfram & Hart, everyone's asking one question: What happened to Angel? The next big Whedonverse epic starts in ***Angel & Spike #9*** (by *Bryan Edward Hill & Gleb Melnikov).*

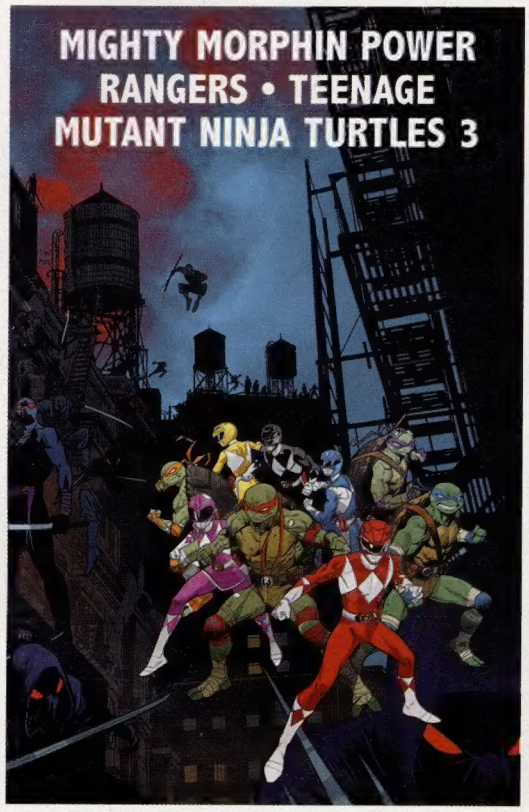
Mindy is a young woman living with an eating disorder and trapped in a battle for her own self-worth in *Sweeney Boo's* ***Eat, and Love Yourself OGN TP.*** When she accidentally discovers a magic chocolate bar that will give her a chance to revisit her past, she thinks she has a chance to put her life back on track. But will she be able to find a way back to her present and, just as important, a way to treat herself with love and kindness, at any size?

Mal matches wits with a serial killer in ***Firefly #14*** (by *Greg Pak & Lalit Kumar Sharma).* The newly minted Sheriff Mal and Boss Moon are given their first big case as local law enforcement: to hunt down and arrest a serial killer haunting their new town! As Mal and Moon dig deeper into the mystery behind the suspicious murders, a surprising new benefactor strolls in, offering new technology and new beginnings for the townspeople... all courtesy of the Blue Sun corporation.

Ansel and his new ally Ugly begin to make their way to the Library Branch of Banned Books—and one step closer to the Folklords—in ***Folkords #4*** (by *Matt Kindt & Matt Smith).* But the Library is full of twists and turns they would never expect... and the closer they get, the harder it is for them to pin down where Ansel's story is going to end...

Donatien has managed to escape the consequences of his brutal crime only by charm and wit, but those close to the victim want answers, and they will do anything to get them in *Maria Llovet's* ***Heartbeat #4.***

After the discovery of carnage in the midst of the Brakebills library, it's clear that there is something much bigger at hand than the rivalry between the hedge witches and the traditional magicians. Someone, or something, sinister is at work, and in ***The Magicians #4*** (by *Lilah Sturges, Lev Grossman, & Pius Bak),* Dean Fogg will finally have to reveal the truth behind opening the doors of Brakebills to the hedges... and what it means for their future.



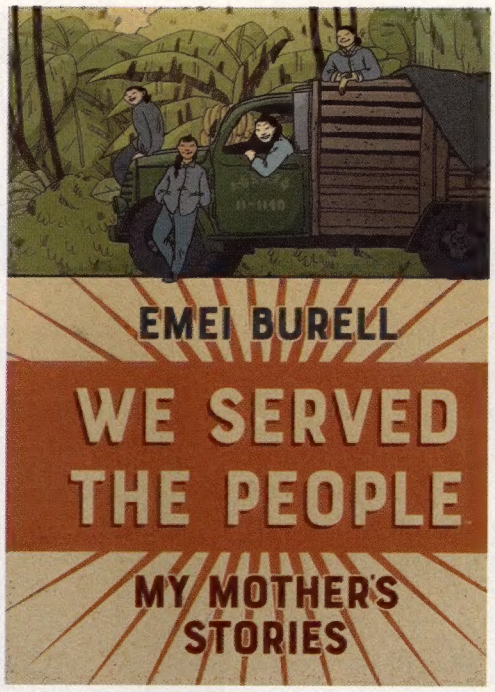
In ***Mighty Morphin Power Rangers/Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #3*** (by *Ryan Parrott & Simone di Meo),* Rita Repulsa faces off against Shredder for control of the weapon that will change the Power Rangers forever! No matter who wins, the world will never be the same! As the two villains battle, the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers must find a way to storm the Foot Clan base to save Tommy, as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles step up to help their new allies in an unexpected way.

A fan-favorite character returns in ***Mighty Morphin Power Rangers #48*** (by *Ryan Parrott & Daniele di Nicuolo).*

The visions through Daisy's prosthetic eye are getting stronger in ***The Red Mother #3*** by *Danny Luckert & Jeremy Haun)*—and it's getting harder every day to resist their call. When a mysterious puzzle shows up on Daisy's doorstep, will it provide the answers she's looking for, or only draw her deeper into the world of the Red Mother?

Steven and the Crystal Gems have plenty of experience saving the day, but when the beach is vandalized overnight, they'll have to step up and keep cleaning the beach while finding the culprit in ***Steven Universe: Crystal Clean OGN TP*** (by *Talya Perper & SM Mara)*... or else Kofi and the others on the Boardwalk won't get customers!

In China, an entire generation's most formative years took place

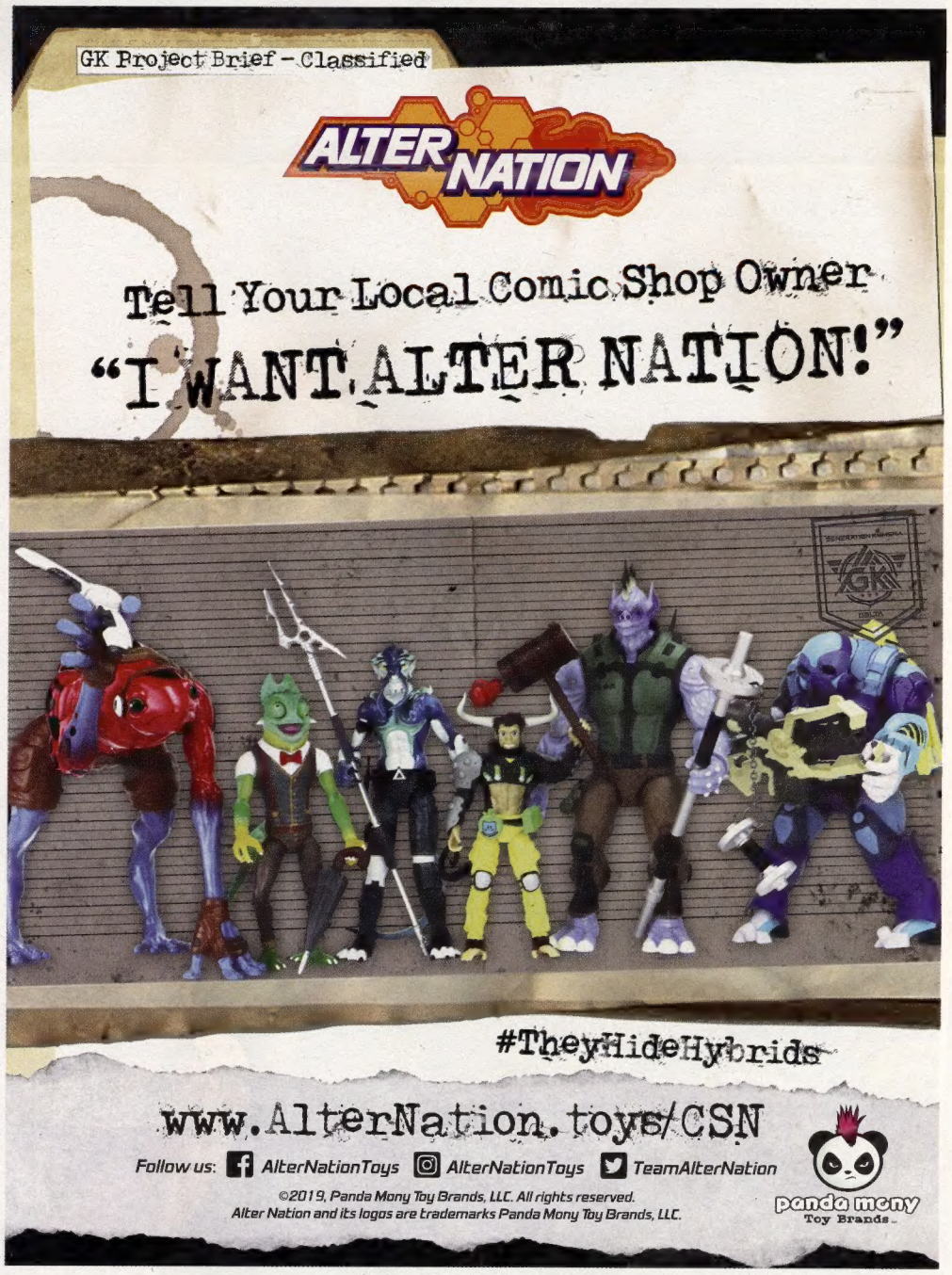


in remote rural areas when city kids were sent to the countryside to become rusticated youth and partake in Mao's mandated Great Leap Forward. In ***We Serve the People OGN HC,*** *Emei Burrell* shares her mother's true experience during the Down to the Countryside Movement of the early 1970s, which sought to increase agricultural outreach and spur social and ideological change amongst youth.

Middle school wasn't exactly stable before, but it becomes a real struggle when sixth-grader Louison is given the strength and powers of a pony by... a tiny pink pony that insists on being called Jean-Pierre? Now, in *Marie Spenale's* ***Wonder Pony OGN TP,*** Louison is saddled with the responsibility of reining in the monsters that are giddy-up to no good in her new school!

Boom! collected editions include:

- ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer Legacy Edition Book One TP,*** collecting ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1998) #s 1–10*** and more.
- ***Firefly Volume 3: The Unification War Part 3 HC,*** collecting ***Firefly #s 9–12.***
- ***Ghosted in LA Volume 1 TP,*** collecting ***Ghosted in LA #s 1–4.***
- ***Jim Henson's Labyrinth Coronation Volume 1 TP,*** collecting ***Jim Henson's Labyrinth Coronation #s 1–4.***
- ***Lumberjanes: Campfire Songs TP,*** collecting ***Lumberjanes: A Midsummer Night's Scheme, Lumberjanes: Somewhere That's Green,*** and more.
- ***The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Volume 111 TP,*** collecting ***MMPR #s 40–43.***
- ***Once & Future Volume 1 TP,*** collecting ***Once & Future #s 1–6.***
- ***Something Is Killing the Children Volume 1 Discover Now Edition,*** collecting ***Something Is Killing the Children #s 1–5*** in a special edition exclusive to comic shops.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